DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 245 188 CS 007 618

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TITLE Linking Logos with Print for Beginning Reading Success.
PUB DATE 83
NOTE 21p.; Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Parents and Reading Conference (9th, New York, NY, January 6, 1984).
PUB TYPE Reports - Research/Technical (143) -- Speeches/Conference Papers (150)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Beginning Reading; Child Language; Cognitive Processes; *Early Reading; Language Acquisition; Preschool Education; Reading Attitudes; *Reading Instruction; *Reading Readiness; *Reading Research; Teaching Methods
IDENTIFIERS *Advertising Logos; *Print Awareness

ABSTRACT

A study examined whether environmental logos could be used as tools for beginning reading instruction. Logos are bold, colorfully adorned symbols featuring printed words in design formats that appear on products and advertisng signs. Subjects were 20 preschool children, half of whom were three and one-half years old, and the rest four and one-half years old. Half of each age group was randomly assigned to experimental and control groups. All were given pretests and posttests consisting of a book handling task, a logo identification inventory, a reading attitude interview, and word/sentence identification cards. The experimental groups were given reading instruction with logos approximately 20 minutes per week for eight weeks. Each received a personalized logo book, and during each session a different logo was introduced and pasted in the children's books. The researcher also transcribed the children's dictated sentences about the new logos. The posttests indicated that the experimental three and one-half year olds improved in their book handling task, and could identify three to five more logos than on the pretest, while control group children could identify only one to two more logos. Children in the experimental four and one-half year group were able to identify six to eight more logos than during the pretest, and their reading attitude and print awareness were improved. Children in both age groups were able to recognize words or sentences during the posttest, indicating that the approach improved print awareness. (Copies of evaluation materials used in the study are appended.) (HTH)

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LINKING LOGOS WITH PRINT FOR BEGINNING READING SUCCESS

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Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the Parents and Reading Conference (9th, New York, NY, January 6, 1984).

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Early readers are developed; they are not born. Exposure to a reading rich environment, with reading being used as a comfortable vehicle for communicating, facilitates this development. Traditionally, preschools have spent their time grooming children for their rites of passage into formalized reading programs; yet, many early childhood teachers are recognizing the need to inculcate preschoolers with the joys of beginning reading. While others are concerned about the leveling off effects of early reading prowess, research has indicated otherwise; children who are early "natural" readers continue to be superior through, at least, the first five years of elementary school (Durkin, 1966).

One strategy for facilitating beginning reading instruction is the linking of personalized unadorned print with environmental adorned print, specifically logos. Logos, which are bold, colorfully adorned symbols featuring printed words in design formats, and which appear on signs advertising products and services, have an indelible effect upon children's memories. Such an effect starts at a very young age -- as young as two years. Eventually, these logos act as communicative tools in helping preschoolers discover the world of meaningful print (Goodman and Altwerger, 1981). If used along with unadorned print in a rebus-like, language experience fashion, logos can be used to facilitate beginning reading practices.

Learning to read evolves from the assimilation of meaningful print and prior knowledge. Children's facility with the printed page also depends upon accommodating their learning interests and language development.

Given these conditions, there needs to be a way to bridge the gap between children's interest in environmental print and their ability to read the printed page. This article describes one approach for bridging this gap.

Purpose of the Study

To see whether environmental logos could be used as tools for beginning reading instruction among preschoolers, a study was conducted with twenty children in a nursery school in South Brunswick, New Jersey. Ten children, approximately $3\frac{1}{2}$ years old, were participants during their morning session; ten children, approximately $4\frac{1}{2}$ years old, were participants during their afternoon session. All children had been designated as pre-readers by the two nursery school teachers. Half of each group was randomly selected for either the experimental or control unit. According to the data form completed by parents, students came from middle class homes with fathers primarily working outside the home. Children from various ethnic and racial backgrounds were represented.

Procedures for the Study

All children were given pretests and posttests consisting of Book Handling Tasks (adapted from Goodman and Altwerger, 1981), a Logo Identification Inventory, an Attitude Toward Reading Interview (adapted from Goodman and Altwerger, 1981) and word/sentence identification cards. Each child was seen individually by me from

April through June, 1983. The experimental unit was given reading instructions with logos by me once a week, approximately 15-20 minutes in length, for eight consecutive weeks. The control unit was given no such instruction. The instruction took place in another room outside the classroom.

After pretesting, each child in both the morning and afternoon experimental groups, received a personalized logo book. Each book cover included the child's name, the McDonald's logo and the word "Book" (e.g., Lindsay's McDonald's Book). During each instructional session, a different logo or two was introduced. The determined order for logo introduction was based on the children's responses to the Logo Identification Inventory during pretesting (McDonald's was introduced the first week; Burger King was introduced the second week and so on). The children pasted logos in their books while I wrote the child's dictated sentence about the logo (e.g., Megan loves Roy Rogers; Matthew, Mommy and Daddy like Coca-Cola). Sentences of the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year olds emanated more from this experimenter than the children themselves; sentences of the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year olds came from the children. Initially, sentences were very simple for both age groups (e.g., Jessica loves Burger King; Mommy loves Roy Rogers). Subsequently, sentences became more complex, especially for the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year olds (e.g., Mommy, Daddy, Lindsay and Kimberly shop at SHOP RITE; Nobody goes to Exxon.). Whenever appropriate, children were guided to include varied verbs (likes, drinks, goes, shops) and varied personalized nouns (Mommy, Daddy, names of sisters, brothers and pets).

During each session, children read their books to this experimenter and to each other. Periodically, children were asked to recognize words in isolation; also, children were taped so that they could hear themselves read. After eight weeks, the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year olds had been exposed to 7 logos in their book and the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year olds had been exposed to 12 logos. At the end, all children took home their books with a list of followup suggestions for parents to pursue.

Results

1. Book Handling Task

The purpose of the Book Handling Task was to find out the children's level of sophistication in identifying a book, explaining its function, distinguishing between its pictures and print and recognizing its beginning and end (see Fig. 1). The book "Go, Dog, Go!" (by P.D. Eastman) was shown to each student.

During the pretest, children in both age groups could identify a book, its function and its pictures; however, children in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group had more dificulty than the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group in recognizing its print, its beginning and its end.

During the posttest, the children in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old experimental group, as compared to the control children, showed improved recognition of a book's print, beginning and end (see Table 1). This improved book handling facility among the experimental $3\frac{1}{2}$ year olds closed the age difference gap with this particular task. While the children in the experimental unit were not

instructed directly on the handling of a book, their instruction with the logo books probably facilitated this improved familiarity with books in general.

2. Logo Identification

The purpose of the logo identification task was to assess the quantity and the type of logos the children could identify. An array of 20 logos representing fast food restaurants, nationally known food/drink products and local stores were presented in random order to each child. Certain logos clearly emerged as being more identifiable than others (see Fig. 2).

During the pretest, the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group could identify between zero and four logos; the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group could identify between one and seven logos. As presumed, greater differences were found between age groups than within age groups (see Table 2).

During the posttest, differences were noticed between the experimental and control units of each age group vis-a-vis the number of logos identified. With the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group, children in the experimental unit could identify at least three to five more logos more than during the pretest; however, children in the control unit could identify only one to two more logos. Similarly, with the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group, children in the experimental unit could identify at least six to eight more logos than during the pretest whereas children in the control unit could identify only one to three more logos.

Obviously, those who had been exposed to beginning reading instruction with logos were able to identify more logos during the posttest. Even those logos not presented during instruction were identified by the children, thereby indicating a renewed or newly discovered interest in environmental print. Of particular interest was the way in which the experimental units of both age groups approached the posttest. They seemed to respond with more enthusiasm and self-confidence than the control unit. Having worked with the logos on a continuous basis, they were eager to see how much they retained from our sessions together.

3. Attitude Toward Reading

The purpose of this task was to discover the children's level of awareness and interest in reading. A series of questions, adapted from Goodman and Altwerger's study (1981), was used (see Fig. 3).

Generally speaking, the children's responses indicated that the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group were less realistic and less sophisticated about the demands of reading than the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group. During the pretest, five children in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group said that they could read, even with their eyes closed. Two children, in fact, showed me how they could read with their eyes closed. Contrastingly, all children in the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group said that they could not read. Most of these children indicated that it was a difficult skill to be acquired at a later stage in their life. For the most part, children

in both age groups indicated that their family members not only knew how to read but also read to them on a fairly regular basis. Reasons cited for the purpose of reading were enjoyment and learning.

During the posttest, differences were noted between the experimental and control units for both ages. For the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group, two of the children exposed to this project indicated that they could read something. (These two children had not said that they could read during the pretest.) They felt that they had learned some new words during this project. Interestingly, these two children had been the most aware of the print presented to them during instruction. Whenever they read their logo books, they accurately pointed to the words as they read. The other three children in the experimental unit did not indicate noticeable differences in attitude or awareness. While they appeared enthused about the project, they still did not seem ready enough to acknowledge the skill of reading appropriately. In contrast, the children in the control unit responded as they did to the pretest.

For the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old experimental unit, noticeable changes occurred in attitude and awareness. All five children exposed to the project said that they could read "something" or "a little". They felt that they had learned new words and were looking for them in books at home and in school. They also indicated that reading was not as formidable as previously perceived. On the other hand, children in the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old control unit responded similarly to the pretest. They still felt that they could not read.

4. Word/Sentence Identification

The purpose of this task was to assess whether instruction made a difference in the number of words or sentences identified. Unadorned words used in the logo book were shown on cards to $3\frac{1}{2}$ and $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old during the pretest. Words and sentences, combining words used in the logo book, were shown during the posttest (see Fig. 4). Each child's name was used as the first word to be recognized for that child. During the pretest, all children from both age groups could identify their own names. No children in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old group could recognize any of the other words shown; two children in the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old group could recognize only one word "book". This confirmed their teachers' assessment of these children as prereaders.

During the posttest, however, children in the experimental unit of both age groups recognized words or sentences. Four of the children in the $3\frac{1}{2}$ year old experimental unit identified four to six words (i.e., Mommy, Daddy, Book, And, Likes, Loves) and two children read the previously unseen sentence "Mommy loves Daddy". All of the children in the $4\frac{1}{2}$ year old experimental unit read at least four of the five sentences provided. These sentences were different combinations of the words used in the children's logo books. Control children of both age groups could not do any of the aforementioned tasks. Children in the experimental units clearly demonstrated greater print awareness than children in the control units. They also responded more comfortably to this task.

Discussion

Aside from reaffirming Goodman and Altwerger's findings (1981) that literacy development does begin prior to direct formal instruction, this study demonstrated that it can be cultivated further with a motivating reading strategy. Encouraging children to use logos, adorned print already recognized in their environment, with personally rewarding print facilitated their desire to communicate even more with print. This was reflected in the results. Those instructed with logo books demonstrated greater ability to identify both adorned and unadorned print (both in and out of the logo book context) than those not instructed with the logo books.

Book handling, particularly for 3½ year olds, was more developed after exposure to the experimental instructional situation. While specific mention was not made of how to handle a book during instruction, the children probably picked this up inadvertently by using their logo books.

While all children demonstrated some initial logo awareness during the pre-test, those children who worked with logos learned more in and out of the instructional situation.

Children's negative or fearful attitudes toward reading, particularly for the 4½ year olds, were dispelled once they were exposed to reading in an enjoyable, non-threatening and personalized manner.

Children's competence in reading words in and out of context was much more obvious for those exposed to instruction. More importantly, they were aware of this competence and pleased with their success.

While this is one isolated study with a small sample of middle-class children, it does indicate that this technique could be one way of introducing reading before the formal school years. It is not intended to be a new "curriculum" but rather a different and additional approach to responding to the children's background experiences. Since these children were exposed to this technique for eight short sessions, they only began to develop a sense of reading. What can happen, as observed informally for two years with two preschool 4 year olds (Wepner, 1982), is that the sentences written become more elaborate. Eventually, the children should be able to recognize the unadorned words from the logo book in varied contexts. They also should be able to read varied sentences with these same words, especially if these words have been used repeatedly in different logo book contexts.

Conclusions and Implications

Appreciating the tender age of preschoolers usually implies acknowledging their need to develop competence and, henceforth, a sense of self-esteem. This occurs when children are exposed to tasks in manageable, personalized ways and experience learning in an

accepting, realistic environment. Linking environmental logos of places and things with important people in children's lives through a language-experience type reading strategy helps preschoolers to satisfy these needs. Children begin to approach reading eagerly and holistically, similar to the way in which psycholinguists advocate beginning reading (Smith, 1982; Weaver, 1980; Goodman and Goodman, 1981). Children feel their success; therefore, they see their strengths as beginning readers rather than their weaknesses as prereaders. Their association with the real world is transferred to the printed page immediately. They then begin to transfer this familiar and meaningful reading vocabulary to other printed material.

Therefore, it behooves early childhood educators to recognize the ability and desire of preschoolers to begin to communicate with contextually supportive and personalized print. The rest will come naturally and effortlessly. We must use what preschoolers already know to help them realize the purpose and function of print and what it can and cannot do for them (Smith, 1982). With continued research in preschool and kindergarten classrooms in urban and suburban areas, we can begin to understand how to promote reading as a whole rather than reading as the sum of its parts.

FIGURE 1

BOOK HANDLING TASKS

(Adapted from Goodman & Altwerger's Study, 1981)

The child is given appropriate picture storybook. The child is asked to:

1. Identify that it is a book;
2. Tell the function of the book;
3. Identify print and pictures inside the book; and
4. Identify the beginning and ending of the story.

Those who want to read from the book will be encouraged to do so.

TABLE 1

FINDINGS OF BOOK HANDLING TASK

	3½ Years (N=10)				4½ Years (N=10)			
	Experimental (N=5)		Control (N=5)		Experimental (N=5)		Control (N=5)	
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
BOOK	*5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
FUNCTION	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
PICTURES	5	5	5	5	5	5	5	5
PRINT	4	5	2	2	5	5	5	5
BEGINNING	2	5	3	4	5	5	5	5
END	2	4	4	4	5	5	5	5

*Number of children

FIGURE 2

LOGOS PRESENTED DURING PRETEST AND POSTTEST

LOGOS (Listed in decreasing order according to post-test)	Number Who Identified Logo (N=20)	
	Pretest	Posttest
*1. McDONALD'S	17	19
*2. SUN MAID RAISINS	18	18
*3. BURGER KING	11	16
+4. SHOP RITE	5	16
*5. COCA-COLA	11	15
*6. ROY ROGERS	3	14
*7. PEPSI	9	12
*8. DUNKIN DONUTS	5	12
+9. TOYS R US	5	10
10. 7 UP	8	9
+11. WENDY'S	0	8
+12. EXXON	1	6
13. A & P	6	6
14. THE GROUND ROUND	1	3
+15. SUNOCO	0	3
16. GRAND UNION	3	3
17. FOODTOWN	3	3
18. SANKA	3	2
19. GULF	0	0
20. MOBIL	0	0

*Used during instruction with 3½ and 4½ year olds.

+Used during instruction with 4½ year olds only.

The remaining logos were not used at all.

TABLE 2

NUMBER OF LOGOS IDENTIFIED

3½ Years (N=10)				4½ Years (N=10)			
Experimental		Control		Experimental		Control	
Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post	Pre	Post
0-4	3-10	0-3	1-5	5-7	13-15	1-7	1-7

FIGURE 3

CHILD'S CONCEPT OF AND ATTITUDE TOWARD READING
(Adapted From Goodman & Altwerger's Study, 1981)

1. Do you know how to read? (If yes, ask question a and b. If no, ask questions c and d).

    a. Did someone help you to learn (if yes, who?) or did you learn by yourself?

    b. Do you like to read?

    c. Do you want to be able to read?

    d. Who do you think will help you to learn to read?

2. Is learning to read easy or hard?

3. Do the people you live with know how to read?

4. Do they ever read to you?

5. Can you read with your eyes closed?

6. Why do you think people read?

FIGURE 4

WORD/SENTENCE IDENTIFICATION

Words/Sentence Examples Shown to $3\frac{1}{2}$ Year Olds	Sentence Examples Shown to $4\frac{1}{2}$ Year Olds
Mommy	Megan loves Erin.
Daddy	Megan and Erin love Daddy.
Book	Mommy and Daddy love Kim and Lindsay.
And	Lindsay likes Salty and Pepper.
Likes	Everybody likes Adam.
Loves	Erica and Adam love Mommy.
Mommy loves Daddy.	Matthew loves Mommy and Daddy.
	Brett likes Jill.

Memory and configuration clues probably facilitated word/sentence identification.

This author wishes to acknowledge the encouragement and support of the two nursery school teachers, Mrs. Elaine Feder, Head Teacher of the 3½ year olds, and Mrs. Joan Shames, Head Teacher of the 4½ year olds, at North and South Brunswick Nursery School.

Also, special thanks is given to the following companies for providing logo specimens and their support in this experiment: Atlantic Richfield Company (owner of the trademark ARCO and the ARCO Logo); The Coca-Cola Company (owner of the trademark COCA-COLA and the COCA-COLA Logo); Exxon Corporation (owner of the trademark EXXON and the EXXON Logo); Gulf Oil Corporation (owner of the trademark GULF and the GULF Logo); McDonald's Corporation (owner of the trademark McDONALD'S and the McDONALD'S Logo); Mobil Oil Corporation (owner of the trademark MOBIL and the MOBIL Logo); PepsiCo, Inc. (owner of the trademark PEPSI and the PEPSI Logo); Sun Refining and Marketing Company (owner of the trademark SUNOCO and the SUNOCO Logo); and Wakefern Food Corporation (owner of the trademark SHOP RITE and the SHOP RITE Logo).

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